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THE CUSTOMS OF THE CH'IANG

David Crockett Graham.

I. *Preface.*

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The writer's first contact with the Ch'iang people was in the summer of 1933 when he went into the Ch'iang region on a collecting expedition for the Smithsonian Institution. He visited a number of villages, including O Er, Lung Ch'i Chai, 龍溪寨, Mu Shang Chai, Tung Men Wai 東門外, and Chiu Tzu T'un 九子屯. He visited some of their homes and sacred places, saw their dance at Chiu Tzu T'un and collected a number of their objects for the West China Union University Museum of Archaeology, Art, and Ethnology.

In the summer of 1941 it was the good fortune of the writer to be included in a group of seventy professors and students sent by the National Ministry of Education to the borderland for social service and research. With a student of the West China Union University Department of Sociology, Mr. Ch'in Hsueh-sheng 秦學聖, whom the writer found to be an excellent companion, he was sent to the Min Valley to study the Miao who were supposed to be there. Finding no Miao in that region, they spent several weeks in the study of the Ch'iang, visiting Mou Chow, Wei, Chow, Wen Ch'uan, P'o Wa, Tung Men Wai, Lung Ch'i Chai, Ta'fo, and Ta Ho P'in Chai, besides T'eng Lin Shan, the home of the hereditary ... a Szu official.

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The writer wishes to express his deep and sincere thanks to Mr. Wang Wen-hsuan 王文萱 director of the National Ministry of Education, and to Prof. Chang Po-hsuai 張伯衡博士 of Cheeloo University for being included in this group and given this opportunity to study these most interesting tribespeople who are so little known, and in some places so misunderstood. It is hoped that this preliminary study will encourage further research in the life and customs of the Ch'iang people.

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In 1933 the writer found among the Ch'iang a spirit of antagonism towards the Chinese the result of centuries of wars and oppression. In 1941 he noted a great change towards friendliness. There are villages where the Ch'iang are no longer called I-jen 夷人 by the Chinese, and where the natives consider themselves to be

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186 Chinese and freely intermarry with them. In many villages only
[197] Chinese is now spoken, and only a few of the oldest people understand the Ch'iang language. The Government has opened primary schools where the Chinese language and culture are taught, and in Wei Chow there is a normal school which the brightest Ch'iang students are encouraged to attend. The writer is much pleased at the improvement in the attitude and relations of the Ch'iang towards the Chinese and of the Chinese towards the Ch'iang.

II. Introduction.

173 I. History. The first references to the Ch'iang people are on the oracle bones. They lived to the west of the Shang dynasty Chinese who made war upon them, took them captives and even offered them as sacrifices to the ancestors of the Shang people. On the oracle bones the upper part of the word meaning Ch'iang is the horns of a sheep or goat, and the lower part is man 𠂇, meaning people who raise sheep or goats.[1] The Chinese word for Ch'iang today consists of the character for sheep or goats above, and below is the character for man 羌. A small third character is sometimes
[231] added 羌, and this character is sometimes abbrevited to a dot. An interesting fact is that while the Ch'iang are all farmers, they depend for a livelihood very much on their flocks of sheep and goats.

174 There is ample evidence to show that the Ch'iang united with the Chou people in the war that resulted in the overthrow of the Shang dynasty.[2] Later there were wars with the Chinese, and at least some of the Ch'iang migrated westward and to the southwest. At this point let us quote the tradition of the Ch'iang. The writer first heard it from Kou P'in-shan 苟聘三, who mentioned a year and a half as the time of the migration. He has heard it from several Ch'iang people and took it down in this form from Mr. Ch'en Chen-shu, who lives above the village of K'a Gu.

I. Creel, Herrlee Glessner The Birth of China, 1936, p. 213.

II. Li Fan T'in Chih, Book Four, History of the Border Section 2.
理番廳志 卷四 邊防志二
Shih Chi, Book Four, Chou Ben Chi, Part Four.
史記四 周本紀第四
Chung Kuo Min Ch'u Shih, Chapter II, The Ch'iang Race.
中國民族史 第十一章 羌族
Creel, Herrlee Glessner, The Birth of China, 1936, p. 215-6
Legge, James, D. D., The Chinese Classics, Vol. III., Part II., The Book of History, pp. 301-2

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Far away there were once two nations, *Tzu La* and *Gu La*. There was a war between them, and as a result *Gu La* (the Ch'iang people) was defeated, and the Ch'iang migrated travelling a year and several months before they reached the place where they now live. On the way they crossed a river, using round boats made of cowskins. A boat leaked, and the sacred books got wet. While the books were being dried on the shore some goats came and ate them. Therefore there are no written sacred books, and their contents are handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. 174

When the Ch'iang reached West China, the Chinese and the Jung 戎 were at war. The Jung were defeated and retired to Tsagulow. The Chinese retired to Kuanhsien leaving the territory in between vacant, so the Ch'iang came in and occupied it. At that time the Ch'iang herded sheep and goats and raised wheat, but not corn. Later under Ch'ien-lung (A. D. 1737-1795) the Wa Ssu came from Wu Ssu Tsang in Tibet and helped the Chinese in a war that lasted twelve years. There was a great battle at Wei Kuan (衛關), where a person can go from the top of the mountain to the river without being seen by the enemy. The Ch'iang were defeated, and the Wa Ssu were given the territory they now occupy, between the Ch'iang and the Chinese.

There is probably both history and tradition in this legend. Since there are several tribes in Burma that have the tradition of a lost book, we can assume that this part of the story is legendary.

2. The Country.

The Ch'iang, at least that part of the Ch'iang people that we are studying, inhabit a region along the T'o and the Min Rivers, approximately between the 31st and 32nd degrees longitude and the 103rd and 104th degrees latitude. From T'ieh Ch'i 鐵溪 on the north to So Ch'iao which is twenty li down the Min River from Wen Ch'uan and from points east of Mou Chow and Wei Chow to about twenty li up the river from Li Fan. Formerly they extended southward as far as Yueh Hsi and northward into Kansu and Shansi. The rivers and valleys are very narrow, and the mountainsides generally very steep. The main cities are Wen Ch'uan, Wei Chow, Li Fan, and Mou Chow. The rivers are from four to seven thousand feet above sea level. The surrounding mountains rise in some places to an altitude of sixteen or seventeen thousand feet. The 131 133

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133 cities and owns along the rivers are inhabited by Chinese. Some of the Ch'iang live in villages or farms in the valleys, but most of them live on farms or in fortified villages called Chai Tzu in the higher altitudes. There are extensive loess deposits that are so deep that they have been terraced and made into good farm lands.

137 Where the Ch'iang live most of the lower altitudes have few trees and little underbrush, a condition that is probably due to woodgatherers and much pasturing of sheep and goats. Higher up, above the homes and villages, are forests which are the source of

132 firewood and lumber. The climate in the lower altitudes is dryer than in the central part of Szechwan, where there is comparatively heavy rainfall. Occasional droughts and semi-droughts occur. The rainfall is heavier in the higher altitudes where the forests have not been exterminated.

101 Northwest of them are the Luh Hua and the Heh Shui, two

136 powerful tribes that, according to some reports, have never been conquered. Southwest of them are the Jia Rung. East of them are the Wa Ssu who helped the Chinese defeat the Ch'iang under Ch'ien-lung. In the high mountains are leopards, bears, and wild boars, and poisonous snakes are sometimes found in the fields and in the forests.

3. The People.

142 The Ch'iang are yellow or brown in color, differing so little from the Chinese that when they are dressed in Chinese clothing it is difficult to distinguish them from the Chinese people. The average height of the men is about 164 or 165 centimeters, the average cephalic index about eighty, the eyes are dark brown, the hair dark brown or black and generally straight, the nose is a trifle narrower than that of the Chinese, and the epicanthic fold is often lacking. There are probably no more convex or "Roman" noses among them than among other eastern Asiatic races. It is thought that they are a branch of the Burma-Tibetan race.

165 The Ch'iang are a hardy people. Both men and women are strong and industrious. The death rate, however, is very high, due to an unbalanced diet, meagre knowledge of hygiene, and the absence of trained physicians and good medicine. The writer took the records of about forty families, and found the death-rate to be six hundred and twenty-six per thousand. It is probable that some deaths that occurred within a short time after birth were not reported.

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III. Economic Life.

1. Communications, Roads, and Bridges.

Among the Ch'iang there are no telephones, radios, or telegraph 20
lines. There are no newspapers, and no books excepting those 487
written by the Chinese and possessed by the few who can read 482
them. Chinese-built roads connect the cities and towns in the valleys. Even here no wheeled vehicles can be used—only "hwagers" and sedan chairs, riding horses, and pack animals. On the Chinese roads some carry loads on the ends of bien dan or poles, but many carry their loads on their backs. Between the Ch'iang homes and villages the roads are unpaved footpaths, very narrow and often very steep. Frequently they go over or along the sides of steep precipices. It is not strange that the Ch'iang generally walk and always carry their loads on their backs. News is passed along by [203]
word of mouth, and naturally it is sometimes inaccurate.

The bridges resemble those of the Chinese and of their various 491
neighbors in this region. A small creek may be waded, or crossed by stepping on large stones. Some bridges are merely logs or boards laid across the streams. One type of bridge is the false or corbelled arch. From both sides large timbers reach out one beyond the other, until they meet above the middle of the stream. A bridge often consists of a single bamboo cable. Two hollow wooden half-cylinders are tied securely around the cable. The person or baggage is tied to this, and when released slides half way across. Then the person pulls himself hand over hand the rest of the way, or the baggage is pulled to the opposite shore by means of a small rope. The larger rope bridges have nine or ten bamboo cables underfoot on which boards are laid, and four or more cables on each side. The longest bridges have several wooden trestles, the bridge sagging down between. As one walks over, the whole bridge shakes.

The rivers are too rapid for boats, which between Mou Chow 502
and Yin Shiu Wan 茂秀湾 and between Wei Chow and Tsugulow are not even used as ferries.

2. Money, Marketing, Bartering, and Borrowing.

Chinese money is the currency of the Ch'iang. Until the latter 436
part of the Manchu dynasty it was silver ingots or lump silver, then it was silver dollars. Now it is Chinese bank bills.

There is some buying and selling in the small villages. This is 432

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done in the houses or in Chinese temples or on the streets. Money may be paid, or exchange may be accomplished by means of barter. If two objects are bartered and they are of unequal value, the balance may be paid in cash or another object may be thrown in to make things even.

The principal market places are in the Chinese cities. Here the Ch'iang bring produce--firewood, corn, beans, wheat, buckwheat, pepper, walnuts fruit, vegetables, chickens, pork, mutton, eggs, hides, etc. With the money they purchase salt, cotton cloth, vegetable oil, and other commodities which they take home.

The interest paid on loans is very high. It varies from sixty or seventy to over three hundred per cent. This is one of the handicaps now faced by the Ch'iang. If the borrower does not pay, the lender sometimes sends a poor person to live in the home of the borrower and eat his food, smoke his tobacco, drink his tea, and sleep in his bed. This may cost the orrower a lot of money but in the end he must pay all the money owed, both capital and interest. He is not credited with what the poor man has cost him. Sometimes the lender comes and takes away a pig, a goat, or a cow. Often the interest is paid in corn. For a loan of one hundred dollars the yearly interest is from two to six dou or pecks of corn, so that the rate of interest depends on the market value of the corn.

3. Habitations and Villages.

The houses are built of unhewn stones plastered together with clay. Advantage is taken of the flat and smooth sides, so that the walls of the houses appear smooth, and the corners square. There are two or more stories. The first story consists of a small open court and rooms or pens for the domestic animals. The floors of the pens are covered with small twigs, grass, or straw, which are [241] trend upon for weeks and mixed with the offal of the animals, and later is used for fertilizer. People live on the second floor where dogs, cats, chickens, and sometimes other domestic animals and [343] fowls range. The roofs are flat, and at the rear of each roof is an open shed in which corn and other grains are stored, and where the women sometimes do their weaving. Similar stone houses are widely used in the highlands of western Szechwan, Si Kang, and eastern Tibet. [243] On the roof the grain is dried, flailed and winnowed, and here in fair weather the inmates visit and look around at

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the scenery. The rear wall projects a few feet higher than the shed, and in the center is a shrine on which is placed the sacred white stone and in front of which the family worships. 342

To build a roof, first large timbers are put into place, and thick boards over the timbers. On the boards are placed brushwood, mountain bamboo, and twigs. Often thorns are added to discourage the rats. Finally dirt is thrown on top and pounded hard. There is a slight slope to the roof so that rain runs off instead of leaking through. There are a few round or square holes in the roof to let out smoke and to let in light. The windows of the houses are small, so that there is insufficient light inside, and since there are no chimneys the houses are filled with smoke while food is being prepared. The walls and ceilings of the houses, as well as the furniture, are blackened with smoke.

The main door of the house opens inwards. At the left is a lock composed of three pieces of wood about three feet from the ground. A large piece of wood about eight by ten inches goes through the wall next to the door. To the left of this is a hole through which the hand can be inserted. A smaller piece penetrates the larger piece at right angles, and lengthwise through this second piece is a hole into which the wooden key is inserted. When all the family is away, the door is locked and the key carried away, and nobody can enter, for no two keys are alike.

In the villages the houses are very close together. Some of them are wall-to-wall. The streets are narrow alleys approximately six to twelve feet wide, and on both sides rise the high stone walls of the houses. Nearly every village has one or more watch towers built of stone which are about eighteen feet square and become smaller towards the top. Some are over a hundred feet high. They were built in former times for defence. In time of war the women and children and the most valuable possessions were taken inside for safety, while from the top arrows and rifle bullets were shot at the enemy. Towards the upper slope the top wall was built higher so as to protect the defenders from arrows and bullets shot from a higher elevation. Often the villages are on cliffs or promontories that make protection easier and the stone walls of the houses and gardens may be supplemented so that the village is a fortress. Nearly all Ch'iang villages are called Chai Tzu or fortresses. 361 349

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4. Occupations.

463 All Ch'iang are farmers. Even the priests and local rulers
[423] have fields which they farm or rent to others. The land, houses,
and tools are owned not by individuals, but by families, and all the
[462] members of the family cooperate in the work. Men do the plowing,
for there is a taboo against women doing so. Men and women
cooperate in hoeing, planting, weeding, fertilizing, reaping, flailing,
winnowing, husking, wood gathering, etc. Women and girls gener-
ally do the cooking, sewing and spinning, and only women weave.
There are some blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, and painters, but
these are farmers who work also at these trades when there is a
demand for their labor. There are no silversmiths or goldsmiths,
for silver and gold ornaments are bought ready-made or made to
order in a Chinese city. Few if any of the Ch'iang are merchants,
although there are Ch'iang homes where matches, vegetable oil,
wine, and a few other commodities are sold. Even the priests are
farmers who have learned to perform the sacred ceremonies when
required.

313 Wood is gathered in the forests on the mountainsides. Groups
of men and women and boys and girls often go out and return to-
gether, singing as they work. Much of the winter supply is gathered
in the fall after the crops have been harvested.

482 All loads, even of water or of wood, are carried on their backs.
Families that are poor sometimes supplement their incomes by
carrying loads on their backs to Kuanhsien and to other distant
places.

226 There is little fishing, probably because there are not many
fish in the mountain streams. Fishing is sometimes done with a
baited hook and line, or by a basket-like trap into which the fish
enter and are unable to escape.

224 Nearly all the men enjoy hunting, and some who are expert
hunt a great deal. Most of the hunting is done in the late fall and
winter after the crops have been harvested. Generally a few men
with several dogs cooperate and share the spoils. Leopards, wild
boar, deer, mountain goats, musk deer, foxes, pheasants and other
game are found. Even monkeys are killed and eaten.

241 When fresh land is desired for cultivation, the trees, brush, and
grass in a section of the forest are cut down and burnt. This gives
a rich soil for a few years, after which the land may be deserted

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and a new plot cut and burnt. This practice is widespread in the mountains of West China. 241

5. Food.

The products of the soil are wheat, corn, buckwheat, millet, barley, beans, peas, potatoes, squashes, turnips, Chinese cabbage, celery and other vegetables, besides walnuts and fruits. Honey-bees are common. Often the bees are robbed of their honey so late that the bees starve to death during the winter. The domestic animals are dogs, cats, horses, cattle, sheep goats, pigs, chickens, and ducks. The main product of the soil is corn. Rice is not raised even in the valleys. 241 231 262 [243]

The above paragraph gives a clue to the food that is eaten. Most families can not afford to buy rice, which must be carried in from Kuangsien. Instead a great deal of corn is eaten. This may be made into cakes, or boiled almost dry and eaten like rice in bowls with chopsticks. Soya beans are made into bean curd, and white and brown beans are boiled. Wheat, buckwheat, and barley may be made into biscuits or cakes always unleavened, for there is no leavened bread among the Ch'iang. Wild fruit vegetables, and berries are sometimes gathered and eaten, and vegetables are sometimes dried and used in the winter time. Any kind of domestic animal or wild game may be killed and eaten with relish, excepting that there is a taboo against killing or eating cattle because they are used for plowing. Eggs are a luxury to be eaten on special occasions. On the whole the Ch'iang do not enjoy a well-balanced diet. 262 252

6. Clothing.

Most of the clothing of the Ch'iang is made of undyed hemp cloth which is woven by the women. Straw sandals are used less than among the Chinese or the Wa Sau. The women make cloth shoes that are more comfortable and more durable. The shoes for dress-up occasions are ornamented with vari-colored flowers and butterflies which are embroidered on the shoes by the women. Stockings are seldom worn. Instead, woolen puttees are wrapped first about the feet, then about the lower legs to the knees. 291

Both men and women wear trousers. The upper garment is a homespun hemp gown. In the front it reaches just below the knees. The gown of a woman is lower behind, reaching almost to the

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291 ankles. The gown of a man is shorter behind, about the same length as in front. In the winter time there may be worn a long gown woven of dark brown wool, or a goatskin coat. In cold weather the hair of this coat is turned inside, and in rainy weather it is turned outside. This skin coat is sleeveless. Both men and women wear instead of hats turbans of white cotton cloth bought in the markets, those of the men and the women are folded differently.

[164] Poor people who have insufficient clothes suffer from the cold in winter time. Bad colds are frequent, and sometimes colds develop into pneumonia

The puttees are made of white wool. In the vicinity of Lung Ch'i Chai women wear red bands around the puttees about half way between the ankles and the knees. In the region of Ts'a To a dark band is worn.

The best linen gowns of the men and the women have borders of blue cloth around the neck and down to the waist on which flowers are embroidered in white.

Woven belts are worn. Generally these are of white hemp cloth, but near Wen Ch'uan and Li Fan the woven belts are varicolored and ornamented with beautiful geometric patterns The designs for these belts have apparently been borrowed from the Jia Rung and the Wa Ssu, for in other parts of the Ch'iang region they occur rarely if at all, and they are very common among the Jia Rung and the Wa Ssu.

[171]

7. Tools, Implements and Utensils.

412 Most of the tools and implements closely resemble those of the Chinese. The hoe is wide flat, and thick, and its handle is about four feet long. A very useful implement is the thick iron sickle which serves to cut both wood and grass. Their axes are heavier and clumsier than foreign axes. As has been stated before, the loom consists of several pieces of wood, and the spindle is simply a stick of wood around which the thread or yarn has been wound.

The plow differs from that of the Chinese. The handle is shorter so that the plowman stoops over and pushes down when he plows, lifting the plow out of the ground when he turns around. The long beam is tied to the yoke, which is little more than a pole and is tied to the shoulders of two cows or oxen. The plowman sings

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as he plows, and it is asserted that the animals cease pulling when the plowman stops singing. 412

In every home there is a square hole in the ground filled with dirt and ashes. This is a very simple stove, and probably has been used for centuries. Similar stoves are found in the temples in or near the sacred groves. In this square there is often an iron stove that consists of a circle about three feet in diameter resting on three iron legs equal distances apart. There are three iron pieces extending from these three legs towards the center, but not meeting. These three pieces hold the cooking vessel above the fire. The writer has seen similar iron stoves among the Lolos of the Ningyuan valley. Probably the ancient form of this stove was three pieces of stone chipped into triangles so that if placed equal distances apart one part of each stone can serve as a leg, and the other in the center hold up the cooking vessel. The stoves in the temples in and near the sacred groves consist of three such stones each. In many homes there are now typical Chinese stoves made of stones, lime, and clay, with two or three fire-holes over which iron kos or cooking vessels can be placed. There are no chimneys, and the smoke goes back out of the stove into the room. In the ko food is boiled fried, and baked. Large [252] wooden dippers are used to pour in and dip out water and other liquids, and iron dippers and ladels are used to stir the hot food, turn it over, or dip it out.

Ladders are generally trees in which large notches have been 417 cut, a type of ladder that is widely used in the highlands of west China.

The walls of the Ch'iang homes are innocent of any pictures [532] that might beautify them, and are blackened with smoke from incense, candles, lamps, and fires.

IV. Social Customs.

1. Social Life

The Ch'iang lead a simple social life. There are no theatricals 517 excepting those given in the Chinese cities and villages. There are no social dances excepting near Chiu Tzu T'un. There is a taboo against using the funeral dance at any other time. One is tempted to conclude that the Ch'iang do not know how to play. The playthings of the children are often pebbles or broken tiles. When at leisure the

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517 men sit and smoke and gossip, and the women spin yarn of hemp thread, make shoes or embroidery, or sew clothing.

527 During the first moon families invite friends and relatives
[525] to a feast where they eat, smoke, talk, and drink wine. There is very little gambling. At this time people may amuse themselves by "playing lion," when two men covered by an imitation lion's skin dance about and fight with a man who always conquers the lion.

517 While working in the fields, tending their flocks, gathering wood or working in their homes, men and women talk and sing songs. When bringing home loads of wood or corn or some other produce they
[562] may stop at a convenient resting-place and chat. There is considerable freedom between the sexes—that is, they visit and talk freely together, with comparatively little sexual irregularity.

535 At Chiu Tzu T'un in 1933 the writer witnessed a dance by
171 twelve women and six men. The women were lined up on the right and the men on the left. First the men would sing a line of a song, dancing rhythmically, and waving their arms from side to side. Occasionally there was a slight, quick lowering of the body. There were graceful steps in unison, a swaying of the body, and a stamping of the feet. While singing each line each person turned around com-
[415] pletely one time. It was both interesting and graceful. There was a jar of wine from which the performers drank through small bamboo tubes. As the wine became low, fresh water was poured into the jar. The dance was led by a female relative of the local ruler. Since she was a Jia Rung, and the Jia Rung are very near, since the dance is lacking in other parts of the Ch'iang region, and since it very closely resembles the Jia Rung dance, it seems safe to assume that this dance was borrowed from the Jia Rung.

2. Engagements.

584 Sometimes through singing "Mountain songs" or otherwise a young man and a young women become attached to each other and desire to get married. In that case they must request their parents to appoint middle men to make the necessary arrangements, and the consent of the two families must be obtained.

In Ch'iang engagements middle men are always necessary. Marriage is not an individual, but a family affair. Generally the young people are not given a choice, but the choice is made for them. A

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refusal is not expected, and approval is not asked. A primary consideration is the value of the girl or woman as a worker to the family of the groom. For this reason wives are often older than their husbands. The writer heard of one boy who at twelve was married to a woman of twenty-six. She was a fine worker. To carry through an engagement and a marriage generally costs over a thousand dollars, and often the groom's family has to borrow. Naturally every man wants a wife and every woman wants a husband, so every person gets married sooner or later. 584 [581]

In 1933 the writer was told that the custom near Tung Mien Wai and Mu Shang Chai was that the groom's family should give the family of the bride a pig's head, a couple of small jugs of wine, some pork, shoes, stockings, etc. At Ta'a To in 1941 he was told that the gift to the bride's parents should be a piece of pork, three jugs of about thirty-five catties of wine, two large pieces of white bread, incense, candles, etc. At Ta Ho P'in Chai near Wen Ch'uan he was told that the groom's family should give eight rolls of cloth, black or blue but not white, twenty-four catties of pork, two large wheat biscuits, three jars of wine, one large wheat cake called in Chinese a Ko kw'ei, one pair of earrings, ten feet of brass wire, and one pair of puttees. There is variation in the different localities and the objects, the amount, and the value varies with every family according to the ability of the groom's family to give

The horoscope is sometimes but not always used. If it indicates that the marriage would be unlucky, the engagement is not consummated. [787]

3. Marriage.

A lucky day is chosen for the wedding. Near Mu Shang Chai and Lung Ch'i Chai in 1933 the writer was told that sometimes the "flowery chair" or bridal sedan chair was used to take the bride to the groom's home, but if not she rode a horse, that on arrival two persons helped the bride out of the chair into the house, and that the bride and the groom kowtowed to the housegod, to the go-betweens, and to the friends. 585

At Ta Ho P'in Chai in 1941 it was stated that the bride rides in a sedan chair (not in a "flowery" or decorated sedan chair as formerly), escorted by her brothers and sisters but not by her

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585 paternal uncles. The groom's family sends two boys ten-odd years old to escort her, and also two young girls. The bride and the groom bow to the house-god, to the parents and grandparents of the groom, to the groom's uncles, to the female relatives, then to all other friends, relatives, and guests. Then in the main room they drink tea.

On the day after the wedding the bride returns to her home. If it is near, she returns the same day. If it is far, she stays over night and returns the following day.

584 Sometimes two families who have both sons and daughters trade daughters and give with the daughters two boxes, bedding, and a few other articles. This saves a great deal of money.

597 If a family has daughters and no sons to continue the family name, it often adopts a son who is married to a daughter. He takes the name of the bride's family, and his children after him. The writer heard of a family in which this occurred for three generations.

587 Sometimes when an older brother dies leaving a widow, a younger brother marries the widow and the children born are reckoned as the children of the older brother. An older brother can not marry the widow of a younger brother.

A widow may take a husband who comes and lives in the family home. The children are considered the children of the first husband, and take his family name.

585 The priest is sometimes invited to perform a religious ceremony as a part of the wedding ceremonies. Burning cedar twigs as incense and chanting his liturgies, he informs the great gods, before the sacred white stone on the housetops, of the marriage and invokes the blessing of the gods, especially of Mu Bya Sei, upon the young couple.

4. Birth.

844 At Tsin To we were told that when a child is born the mother's parents give her a peck of rice, one hundred eggs, ten catties of pork, a bowl of *chiu mi* or wine rice, and clothing, a hat, and shoes for the baby. This custom also varies greatly with different families. A mid-wife helps the mother at childbirth. After the child is born the mother must not leave the house for thirty some-

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times forty days. Later the mother's relatives are invited to a 844
feast and the child is given a name.

When the child is forty days old it is taken to the sacred grove 851
and there is a ceremony which is performed by the priest or *bi bu*.

5. Sickness.

Among the Ch'iang disease is one of the most deadly enemies, 164
for the people know little about the principles of health and sanita- 751
tion. On the first story of the homes are the latrines and the 759
domestic animals, and there are few if any windows excepting those opening into the small front courtyard. The unsavory air and smells constantly rise into the living-rooms above. The air is smoky and the windows small. The habit of spitting on the floor means that the floor is covered with germs. In addition there is the night-soil of the dogs, cats, chickens and sometimes goats. Children playing on the floor get the germs on their fingers and then into their mouths. Sweeping stirs the dust and it is breathed into people's lungs. Fleas, flies, lice, and bedbugs spread disease. Smoke causes eye-troubles, and colds in winter-time sometimes turn into pneumonia. Epidemics of measles, smallpox, typhoid and other diseases spread through the villages. Sickness is so common that a foreign visitor is constantly appealed to for medicine.

The people often use medicine, but they frequently misuse it and it often causes death. Some of the practitioners who call themselves doctors are worse than useless. A Ch'iang friend told the writer that his daughter had a discharge in one of her ears. He called a local doctor who washed out the ear by squirting cold unboiled water into it. The child died next day with severe pains in her head.

It is believed that all diseases are caused by demons, so when 753
people become ill they often call the priest to exorcise the demon that is causing the disease.

6. Death and Burial.

As soon as it is known that a person is dead, there is weeping 764
with tears. The newest and best clothing of the deceased is put on, and the corpse is placed in a wooden coffin. For two or three days it is left in the home, after which it is carried out and buried or cremated. A priest performs the ceremony of opening the way.

Formerly cremation was the one way of burial, but in recent 761
years burial in graves has become customary in villages where 177

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764 Chinese influence is strong. In more remote places cremation is
177 still the most common method.

At Lung Ch'i Chai there is a flat stone near the place of
764 cremation. The coffin is placed on this stone while the relatives perform a funeral dance. Then the coffin is carried to the place of cremation while the priest chants the sacred songs. The relatives weep while the coffin and the corpse are burnt to ashes. A bowl or jar is broken and the fragments are thrown inside. Next morning, after the fire has cooled down, the relatives come and gather the ashes and deposit it in the large tomb near by.

764 At Lung Ch'i Chai there is a common grave which on the
349 outside looks much like a Chinese tomb. On the outside there is one large opening or door, and inside there are two. These doors are never closed. The cremation is done in two wooden sheds near by, which are in a poor state of repair. The ashes of the men and boys are placed on the right—on the left as one faces the outside door from the inside—which is the place of honor, and the ashes of the women and girls are deposited on the left. The ashes of a great many people have been deposited here.

The crematory houses are small roofed buildings about ten feet square. This is set on a stone base that rises about a foot from the ground. The sides are not boarded up, but consist of small upright posts a few inches apart, and large posts on the corners. Before the cremation takes place, eight or more men lift the entire building off its hinges and deposit it at one side. After the cremation it is again set into place. One or more families use the same crematory house, and there are several such houses near each village.

766 A baby is often not formally buried or cremated, but simply covered up in a hole in the ground.

764 Near Ts'a To and Ho P'ing Chai small crematory houses, varying in size according to the financial ability of the family, are sometimes built and burnt with the coffin and the corpse inside. There is a funeral dance, and the priest chants and performs his sacred ceremony.

766 People who die violent and unnatural deaths—women who die
995 in childbirth, and men and women who fall over a cliff, are drowned, are killed by wild animals, are poisoned to death or die by hanging, become demons. These are cremated even in villages where burial in tombs has become common, and the priest performs a ceremony by which he encloses the demon inside a jar, after which it is taken

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to a crossroads and the jar is buried upside down. The jar is covered by paper, and priests have told the writer that the paper moves because the demon is jumping about inside. During cremation, in some villages, two wooden birds are placed on the coffin. They are rescued and carried away to the homes of the rescuers. 766 775

When a person dies there is present a poisonous breath called *sa ch'i* 煞氣. To offset its effects and to keep away demons a cockerel is sometimes killed and its blood sprinkled on the door-posts.

V. *Religion.*

1. The Future Life.

The Ch'iang have not a very definite idea of the future life. Some say that hades is below and that it is a dark and shadowy place. They have heard the Christian teaching about heaven and hell, and that of the Buddhists and Taoists about hell and Western Paradice. Their idea of the soul does not seem to be very clear. There are few if any memorial customs excepting those that were influenced by the Chinese. They say that they love and revere their ancestors, living and dead. Said one, "If we offer food or burn spirit money, what good does it do? If we offer food or wine, they cannot eat or drink it. Spirit money when burnt turns into smoke." Some believe in reincarnation. Many commemorate their ancestors on the fifth day of the fifth moon or the fifteenth day of the seventh moon. Some worship their ancestors in their homes on the first, fifteenth, and thirtieth of each lunar month. 775

2. The World View.

These people live on the sides and tops of high mountains, or in narrow valleys. The climate is cool and comparatively dry. Near them live the powerful Jia Rung, the Wa Ssu, the Hei Fan, and the fierce Heh Shui, Luh Hua, and Bolotzu. Wild animals live in the forests and attack human beings, the crops, and the domestic animals. There are floods and droughts. People fall over the cliffs or drown in the streams. Lightning strikes trees and houses, and sometimes kills people or animals. Earthquakes shake down houses, rolling stones kill or injure people, and pestilences sweep the country killing men and domestic animals. The Ch'iang are not 789

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789 educated or scientifically trained, and they assume that they see in these events the working of mysterious forces that may do good or harm. The priests, the gods, the ceremonies and the sacred implements are surcharged with mysterious power with which he seeks to control events, warding off calamities and enabling him to enjoy a successful and satisfying life, in which the basal needs of food, sex, clothing to protect from the cold, shelter from the forces of nature and protection from enemies, numerous descendants etc. are satisfied, and one can enjoy a successful and happy life.

3. The Gods.

776 The Ch'iang are not monotheists, and there is no certain evidence that they ever have been. The priest at Mu Shang Chai, who is a relative of the deceased Christian pastor Kou P'in-shan, stated that in his ceremonies he worshipped besides the greatest god twelve other gods. At Lung Ch'i Chai we saw two different shrines on housetops where the large white stone was surrounded by twelve smaller stones. In the sacred grove at Lung Ch'i Chai there are four different shrines to four different gods. By persistent enquiry we learned that in some of the villages the Ch'iang have five major gods and twelve minor gods, not counting a goodly number of Chinese gods that are found in Ch'iang homes, in wayside shrines, and in Chinese temples. In addition to making enquiries in several different localities, we have translated, as well as possible considering our very limited knowledge of the language, enough of the chants of two different priests to assure ourselves that they worship a number of gods. In one of the chants the different gods are named in order as we will give them below, and called upon to come and assist the priest. While we must make allowance for variations in different localities, we can be sure that they are not monotheists and worship more than one deity.

[177] The supreme god is called Mu Byei Sei (mv bjei sei), Mu Bya Sei, M Ta Bei, M Bya, Sei, Ma Byei Ch'i, and at least at Tung Men Wai, Lung Ch'i Chai and Mu Shang Chai where Christian influence has been strong he is often called Abba Ch'i or Abba Sei. Abba means father and it may be applied to any god. On the other hand a number of Ch'iang have asserted that Abba Ch'i or Abba Sei is properly used only to designate Chinese gods in Chinese temples. The first two syllables, Ma bei, mu bya, or m bya, mean sky and sei

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er ch'i means god. Literally it means sky god. This idea is closely related to that of T'ien 天, meaning sky, God of the Sky or Heaven, of the Chou dynasty Chinese, and it must be remembered that the Ch'iang lived close enough to the Chou about 1121 B. C. to unite with them in the conquest of the Shangs.[1] At present many of the Ch'iang identify Mu Bya Sei with Yu Huang Shang Ti 玉皇上帝, the highest god of the Taoists, and also with the Christian God. Mu Bya Sei is the greatest of all gods, is righteous and pure, controls everything everywhere in heaven and on earth, requires righteousness among men, protects men and domestic animals, gives rain and good crops, and helps people secure children and a numerous posterity. 776

The supreme god is worshipped near sacred white quartz stones, called in different localities lu sha, lu ts'a, lo p i etc. Its whiteness symbolizes the purity and righteousness of the god. The white stone is sacred and holy, and near it communion with the god is natural and easy. Not every white quartz stone is sacred. It must be the right shape, somewhat pointed at the top and with a wide base on which it can stand upright. The sacred white stone has superhuman power, and for this reason it is placed on top of graves, and on walls in front of doors to keep demons from entering the house. Generally the sacred white stone is not identified with Mu Bya Sei, but we have met some individuals who have affirmed that the white stone is Mu Bya Sei. The use of sacred white stones is widespread in Si K'ang, eastern Tibet, and among the tribespeople of western Szechwan. 778 776 823

The sacred white stone is used as a place of worship on the top of every house, at the rear and in the center, on the highest point of the back wall. Below it is a small platform and a hole for burning incense. Here Mu Bya Sei is worshipped by the men of the household. Another sacred white stone is found in the temple in or near the sacred grove, and still another on the shrine near the sacred tree or trees in the sacred grove.

A second god is Abba Mula(a· ba· ma la·), mo lo sei (mo· lo· sei) or abba mo lo sei. Near Tung Men Wai, Lung Ch'i Chai, and Mu Shang Chai he is sometimes called Ndjei Tsu or Nyei Su. No priest is without this god, for without it he would be powerless. It is his patron or guardian deity and instructor. This god consists of the skull of a goldenhaired monkey wrapped into a round bundle in sheets of white paper. Inside are also dried pieces of a golden- 776

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776 haired monkey's lungs, liver, intestines, lips, and finger-nails. Its eyes are often old cowry shells. It is so wrapped that the face of the skull is visible at one end. The priest will not allow another person to touch his Abba Mula or sometimes even to see it, and he will not take it down from its shrine without first worshipping it and burning incense. Abbo Mula has a permanent place in the hearts of the Ch'iang. One priest said to the writer with disapproval that "Mr. Torrance said that this was a temporary god until Jesus came."

354 776 We have noted the fact that one form of the Ch'iang stove has three legs. These are sacred and must not be touched. One often has a hole in it, and in this hole is a ring. This leg is the fire god, Mo Bo Sei or Mu Bu Sei. He controls the fire in the home and prevents it from burning the house. The second leg is Abba Sei. This is not the supreme god, but the male ancestor of the Ch'iang, who is worshipped and revered. The third is Ata Sei who is the female ancestor of the Ch'iang and is worshipped as such. This is the triad of the Ch'iang.

776 There is a group of five greatest gods. They are

1. Mu Bya Sei, who is supreme.

2. Ru Be Sei, the earth god. He controls the earth, causes rain and good crops, protects people from illness and other calamities, and helps them.

3. Lolo Sei He controls the snow mountains and the shrubs and herbs that grow only a foot or two high near the snow line.

4. P'i Ru Sei. He controls the forests and large trees on the high mountains.

5. Su Mu Sei who also controls forests, and governs wild animals and fowls.

All these five are worshipped on the housetops and in the sacred groves, at least in some localities, at the same time that the highest god is worshipped.

There is a second group of twelve lesser gods.

1. Ji Gwe Sei, the family or house god who protects the home and its inhabitants.

2. Stu Ja Sei who controls and protects domestic animals, pigs, cows, sheep, goats, chickens, ducks, etc.

3. Ndzi Ju Sei. He is a god of wealth controlling the finances of the home, gold, silver, money, etc.

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4. Yi Mu Sei, She gives sons, protects women when they have conceived and during childbirth, and protects children. 776

5. Mya Wei Sei who protects men and boys.

6. Sti P'r Sei who protects women and girls in matters not connected with childbirth.

7. Do Dzu Sei a door god who is on the right side and keeps demons out of the homes.

8. Nu Nga Sei a door god on the left side who helps keep out demons.

9. Sbe Pri Sei, the god of the bin who controls the five grains after they have been harvested and are in the house or in the bin.

10. Mo Bo Sei or Mu Bo Sei, the fire god who controls the fire in the home lest it burn up the house.

11. Abba Sei, the male ancestor.

12. Ata Sei, The female ancestor.

These are regarded as so distinctly Ch'iang gods that they are put into a different category than the Chinese gods whose images are worshipped in shrines, in homes and in temples. The pronunciation of the names of the gods as given above is that which was given us at Ta Ho P'in Chai, near Wen Ch'uan.

The above Ch'iang gods have no images.

There may be other gods that are regarded as Ch'iang, but at present we can not affirm it with certainty. Many Chinese gods, however, are commonly worshipped by the Ch'iang. Among them are the Pearly Emperor, Ch'uan Chu 川主, the Lord of Szechwan, Wang yeh 王爺 who is elsewhere the god of boatmen. The housegod 天地君親師位 meaning Heaven, Earth, Rulers, Relatives, Scholars, the T'ai Shan Shih Kan Tang 泰山石敢當, the T'u Ti 土地, Kuanyin, and many others. They are regarded by the Ch'iang as real, living deities.

4. The Priesthood.

The Ch'iang are a very reverent and devout people, and their religious ceremonies and rituals are considered to be very important. They must be performed with exactness and fitting decorum. Some of them are long. Since they have no written language their chants or songs, which they regard as the equivalents of sacred 793 538

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793 538 books, are taught by word of mouth, memorized and passed down from generation to generation, from father to son or from teacher to pupil. In Tung Men Wai and at P'u Wa the line has ceased and there is now no Ch'iang priest. There must be no incorrectness in the performances or in the repetitions. There is therefore a special priesthood who, however, are also farmers and have wives and children. They are important persons, highly respected in their communities, but they have no distinctive dress.

793 The priest officiates in all important ceremonies. At least that is the ancient custom. In localities where there are no priests, as at Tung Men Wai, the local people sometimes officiate, or a Taoist priest may be called to perform funeral ceremonies or to exorcise demons, since the Ch'iang priests are more expensive.

In most of the ceremonies performed to Mu Bya Sei on the housetops, the head of the house officiates. On special or most important occasions the Ch'iang priest is called in. Since he is an important person, whenever he officiates in such a ceremony he must be boarded and lodged, given meat or some other commodity, and there must be a special feast. Sometimes he must be paid money also. Since the priest has no special costume, he wears the white homespun garments such as are worn by all Ch'iang worshippers.

793 796 Priests are responsible for conducting sacred ceremonies that bring contact with and assistance from the gods. They have superhuman potency without which their work and ceremonials would not be efficacious. In 1933 a priest told the writer his ceremonial implements and stated that the reason he sold them and no longer acted as priest was that he had lost his efficacy.

When a priest has finished his course of instruction and is ready to begin his work as a priest, an ordination ceremony takes place. His face is ceremoniously washed with sacred water for purposes of purification. Incense, candles, and cedar twigs are burnt and a white cockerel is killed. After the ceremony, which takes place in the sacred grove, he takes his full responsibility as priest.

The priest, who in different localities is called bi bu (bi- bu-), bi bo or bi mu performs the following ceremonies:—

1. He conducts the worship of the great god or gods in the sacred grove on the first day of the sixth moon, or the first day of

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the eighth moon, or the first day of the tenth moon. He dances, beats his drum, and chants his "sacred books." 793 796

2. Since the souls of people that die violent deaths become demons, their bodies are cremated.

3. Demons are enticed by the priest into jars which are buried upside down on cross-roads or near the graves of the persons whose souls have become demons.

4. It is believed that if a man or a woman has pain in his bowels or chest this is caused by a demon. A ploughshare is heated white-hot, the priest chants and treads on the white-hot ploughshare with his foot, then treads on the stomach and chest of the patient, and waves the hot plough-share over the chest and stomach, and sometimes over the back, of the patient. This exorcises the demon. [755]

5 He divines to determine lucky days—for weddings, for beginning a journey, for starting to build a house, and many other things. Priests are supposed to have no books, but some priests have a book in which there is no writing, but there are many pictures. The twelve creatures of the zodiac occur several times in the book. This is a book for divination, and especially to determine lucky days. [787]

6. He conducts funerals.

7. At Mu Shang Chai the writer was told that the priest makes connections with the Earth Vein Dragon and with the Earth Mother and tells them to protect the deceased.

8. At Mu Shang Chai it was also stated that the priest ceremonially purifies the clothing of the deceased by incantations, smoke, etc., and that he informs the twelve gods of the decease.

9. He performs special ceremonies of worship on the housetops when requested to do so.

10. He performs special ceremonies on the housetops or in the sacred groves in performance of vows.

11. He ordains new priests.

12. He performs the ceremonies of setting up new gods in the homes.

The above list is probably not complete.

5. Sacred Implements.

The implements used by the priests in worship are sacred, and are to be handled with reverence. They are also naturally surcharg- 778

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778 ed with potency so as to add to the efficacy of the priest in his ceremonies.

534 978 1. The sacred drum. It is covered with goatskin on one side only, and has a handle inside on which there is generally some crude carving. There is one drumstick. Sometimes paper cut into strips is pasted onto the edge of the drum to represent hair.

292 778 2. The priest's hat. It is made of the skin of a golden haired monkey. The ears and eyes are left on, and the tail is sewed onto the back. In front are old cowries arranged into patterns, polished circular white bones that are thought to be the kneecaps of tigers, and sometimes seashells. Occasionally on the hat is a silver plaque on which there is some Tibetan writing and the word *sang* 賞 or reward in Chinese. This plaque is given by a local Chinese magistrate for assistance in praying for rain or performing some other ceremony. It adds to the prestige of the priest.

3. A sacred cane with a sharp point at the bottom are generally having a human-like head carved on the top to represent the king of demons. This cane, like that of the Taoist priest, is for exorcising demons. Very rarely a design representing a snake is carved on the cane. Naturally a snake on this sacred stick would make it more efficient in the exorcising of demons.

4. A brass gong, six to eight inches in diameter, slightly concave inside. It has a tapper and a leather handle. Similar brass gongs are used among the Nashi or Moshi of western Yunnan and by black lamas in west China and eastern Tibet.

5. A ceremonial dagger or sword. With this the goat or cockerel that is sacrificed is killed by cutting the throat. It also inspires fear in the hearts of the demons.

6. An iron or brass seal on which are elaborate Chinese characters. This is exactly like that of the Taoist or Buddhist priests, and also like that of the *Tuan Kung*.

[177] 7. Carved boards for printing charms on paper. The charms consist of Chinese characters.

8. In some localities there is a skin bag into which the priest puts pieces of meat or other objects given him for his services.

10. There is a collection of eagles' claws, Chinese bronze or brass coinlike charms, wild goats and wild boar's tucks, small horse-bells, etc.

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11. A long naturally notched antelope horn. If a person has 778
a pain in his eyes, hand, back or leg, the point of the horn is dug 755
into the ground, the priest chants, water is poured onto the disturbed ground, and the demon is exorcised.

Small brass mirrors are sometimes also worn on the priest's 778
ceremonial hat. Cowry shells have mysterious potency, and on the ceremonial hat add to the efficacy of the priest. Sometimes cowry shells are sewed onto the hats of babies to protect them from demons.

Some sacred implements found only in limited areas have been omitted

6. Sacred ceremonies.

As has already been stated, most ceremonies in the home are 796
performed by the head or by another member of the family. On special and important occasions the priest is called in. Friends and relatives may attend. Since women are considered to be [562]
impure, they are not allowed to attend any ceremonies in the sacred groves, or on the housetops. Inside the home they must stand at a distance during the ceremonies.

Practically always there is a bloody sacrifice as a part of the ceremony. A goat, a cockerel, a yak, a "p'ien niu" or cow from the grasslands that seems to be half yak and half cow, or rarely a pig is offered. It is never a cow that has been used in plowing. The sacrifice is a gift to the deity, and the primary purpose is to make a contact with the god in order to secure his favor and help. In central Asia there is a widesprsad practice of presenting to an important person a gift as a means of securing his friendship and assistance, and it is generally expected and welcomed by the giver of the favors. This idea is transferred to the gods, with the result that before a favor is asked there is a ceremony of worship in which incense, candles, and spirit money are burnt, and gifts are made of wine, or pork, and the sacrifical animal is killed as a means of presenting it to the gods.

Mu Bya Sei and the other gods are righteous, and require good conduct on the part of their followers. Forgiveness of sins naturally is included in the list of favors sought, but that is far from the only

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796 purpose for the offering of sacrifice. Rain, good crops, health, children, protection for the domestic animals, protection from the demons that cause disease and other calamities, as well as the benign favor of the gods and heart-reviving communion with them, are among the things sought.

796 782 The burning of incense is a vital part of worship. Indeed, this seems true of all native religions in central Asia. The Ch'iang generally use cedar twigs, although sometimes incense sticks and candles are added. More rarely the leaves and twigs of two bushes and a large-leafed shrub that grow in very high altitudes are substituted for cedar twigs. The fragrant odor is believed to please the deity and cause him to be more propitious. Spirit money is sometimes burnt with the belief that burning transforms it into actual money that can be used in the spirit world.

Generally some unleavened bread is offered. Among the Ch'iang and other people in the highlands no bread is leavened, so the offering of unleavened bread was originally accidental

In most localities the goat offered is not a lamb, but a full-grown animal between three and six years old. It is usually white, but in many localities a dark-brown or black goat can be used. It must be of only one color, and unblemished—that is, its horns, ears, etc, must have no defect.

The shedding of blood is a natural part of the sacrifice. The blood is not shed for the remission of sins, but is a necessary part of the performance. After the sacrifices in the groves blood is generally sprinkled on the door of the temple to show that the sacrifice has been performed. When the sacrifice is on the housetop, blood is generally not sprinkled on the doorposts, and when it is done it is generally to frighten demons and to keep them from entering the house.

796 776 In some villages Mu Bya Sei is worshipped on the housetops on the first and on the fifteenth of each moon, and also on new year day and on some other days during the first month. In some localities the great gods are worshipped in the sacred groves three times, the first day of the sixth month, the first day of the eighth month, and the first day of the tenth month, but the tendency is to perform the sacrifices less frequently. There are villages in which it is performed only once a year.

796 778 On the days when the great ceremonies are performed in the sacred groves, and on the second and third days afterward no stranger must pass along the roads near the sacred grove nor enter

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the village. If anybody does so, serious calamities may result. Near Ts'a To the writer was told that once two strangers entered the village a day or two after the sacrifice had been performed, with the result that during that year many of the domestic animals died. 796 778

7. Sacred Groves.

Every village has a sacred grove. Its trees, which are generally oaks, are sacred and must not be cut down. In it are from one to three trees that are especially sacred and near these is an altar capped with a sacred white stone. In front of this altar the sacrificial animal is killed. In or near the sacred grove is generally a small temple made of stones and plastered together with clay. There are no images in it, but in one corner is a sacred white stone.

There is a procession led by the priest and the master of ceremonies followed by men and boys from all the homes in the village. They first go to temple where the priest chants, beats his drum, and now and then dances. Then they march to the altar near the most sacred trees, where the animal is sacrificed and offered to the gods. Then they return to the temple where the meat is cooked and divided, and the flesh is eaten. A large cake of unleavened wheat bread is offered with the goat.

Most of the ceremony is performed at night and very early in the morning. The sky and the stars above, the trees and shrubs below, the darkness and the silence, the sacred trees and the altar with its sacred white stone, give an atmosphere of awe and wonder so that the worshipper believes that he meets his gods and feels their very presence. The worshipper experiences the emotional thrill that is realized through the belief that he has had actual communion with his gods.

In recent years some of the sacred trees have been cut down and used, some by Chinese soldiers, and others by the Ch'iang themselves.

8. The Tradition of Hebrew Origin.

Before the establishing of the Chinese Republic neither Chinese, foreigners, nor Ch'iang had any idea that the Ch'iang were Hebrews. It was approximately 1915 when Rev. Thomas Torrance began to work among the Ch'iang people. He sincerely loved them, and tried to help them by teaching them the Christian religion, by opening schools (which he was prevented from doing), and by giving them good bulls, cockerels, etc. One of his early converts, and the most 174 114

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174 important among them, was Kou P'in-shan, called Isaac Wh t heart in Mr. Torrance's book, "The First Missionaries To China." Mr. Torrance became interested in the customs of the Ch'iang, and especially in their religion. He believed that he saw physical resemblances between the Ch'iang and the Hebrews, and also that there were close resemblances in their social and religious customs. Mr. Kou was also interested, and at Mr. Torrance's suggestion he travelled among the Ch'iang looking for parallels. Both Mr. Torrance and Mr. Kou became convinced that the Ch'iang were Hebrews. Mr. Kou wrote a short pamphlet in which he expressed some of his veiws, and Mr. Torrance later wrote his book, "The First Missionaries To China," in which he elaborately states his belief and his proofs. The research of Mr. Torrance and of Mr. Kou P'in-shan became subjective rather than objective, a seeking for facts to prove a theory, and Mr. Torrance's book is the finest example that the writer has ever seen of the results of subjective research in the interpretation of the life and customs of a somewhat primitive people. Facts have seemed to fit into theories when they really do not, resemblances have been exaggerated, and differences overlooked. The Ch'iang are a likeable people with some good characteristics and Mr. Torrance is to be commended for his sympathy and love for them, but that they are Hebrews is most unlikely, and the key to an understanding of their psychology, life, customs, and religion is a knowledge of the psychology of primitive people.

The following facts are worthy of note:—

[776] 1. The Ch'iang are not monotheists. In most localities they have at least seventeen gods that are considered to be Ch'iang, and it is certain that there is no place where there is not at least five. It is likely that the seventeen gods are known and worshipped all over the Ch'iang region. This does not include numerous Chinese gods that are worshipped almost everywhere.

[144] 2. There is not a single physical characteristic that would convince a physical anthropologist that they are Hebrews.

[771] 3. Their sacred ceremonies are not primarily for the forgiveness of sins, as is asserted in "The First Missionaries to China," although that is included.

[177] 4. The sacred cane shown opposite page 98 in "The First Missionaries To China," is a Mt. Omei pilgrim's walking-stick with the dragon head knocked off. Nowhere else in West China are such

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walking-sticks made, and every Ch'iang to which the writer has shown the picture has stated that he has seen nothing like it in the Ch'iang region. Snakes on canes used by the priests are very rare among the Ch'iang and are much more crudely carved. When a snake does occur it is with the idea that the snake makes the stick more efficient in exorcising demons. 174 177

3. The Ch'iang tradition is that the migration to western Szechwan took one year and several months, not three years and six months as is affirmed on page 19 of "The First Missionaries to China." Even Kou P'in-shan stated to the writer that it was one year and several months. 174

6. The flat roofed houses, the high watch-towers, the stone buildings, the sacred white stones and many other culture traits are common among tribespeople all over the highlands of western Szechwan, Si K'ang and eastern Tibet, and may have been acquired by the Ch'iang after they arrived in Szechwan. The sky god is very similar to the god T'ien worshipped by the Chous who were the allies of the Ch'iang in B. C. 1121. 174 171

Let us assume for a moment that the Ch'iang are Hebrews. How amazing it is that neither the Ch'iang nor the Chinese knew anything about it, and that the Ch'iang have no taboo against eating pork. 174

VI. *Conclusion.*

This article is a preliminary statement that needs criticism, correction, and amplification. They will be welcomed by the writer, as well as additional information. 105

The Ch'iang people are changing rapidly. There are villages in which it is almost impossible to find any person that can speak the Ch'iang language and who understands their customs. The great variation in language and mores in different localities, and the natural reticence of the people make it extremely difficult to understand and to interpret accurately the life and ideals of these people.

They came to this country many centuries ago, apparently from the northeast, and settled in this mountainous, semi-arid land where it has been difficult to wrest a livelihood from nature, and where powerful enemies have made war on them. Their neighbors, excepting the Chinese, are in the Tibetan culture area, and through them numerous culture traits have penetrated into the Ch'iang region. They have had constant cultural contacts with the Chinese through

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105 war, government, trade, and intermarriage, and they have been influenced by the Chinese more than by any other cultural group. The establishment of more friendly relations and the opening of primary schools in recent years have accelerated this influence.

Physically the Ch'iang are of the yellow race, possibly of the Tibetan-Burman racial group, with dark eyes, black and straight hair, and a brown complexion.

The Ch'iang have a supreme god whom they call Mu Bya Sei or Sky God, to whom they look primarily for help in their quest for a satisfying life. He closely resembles T'ien the god whom the Chou people worshipped as a supreme god in 1121 B. C. when the Ch'iang assisted the Chou in the war that put an end to the Shang Dynasty. The Ch'iang are not monotheists, for they have numerous gods which they have probably worshipped for many years, besides the Chinese gods whom they have learned to worship in recent times.

They have no written language, and the chants and rituals have been handed down by word of mouth from one priest to another. There are elaborate rituals with sacrifices for worship on the housetops and in the sacred groves. These rituals are most carefully and reverently performed. The gods and the priests have, it is believed, superhuman power made available through the ceremonies and through charms and incantations. The white stone is symbolic of the purity of the god, or gods, and near it communion can be had with the deities, who are actually present. The white stone possesses superhuman potency in common with charms, sacred implements, cowries, etc., and it is sometimes used as a means of protecting the homes from demons.

The Ch'iang are a strong and industrious people whose morals on the whole are good. They should be treated with sympathy and respect. With the cooperation and friendship of the Chinese Government and the Chinese people, and with better schools and religious contacts, they can make a valuable contribution morally, commercially, and it may be culturally to the future of the western highlands and of China.

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16. 前漢書 第九十五卷 西南夷列傳 西羌傳六十五
17. 後漢書 第八十七卷 西南夷列傳 西羌傳七十七
18. 茂州志 卷三 邊防 道光十一年
19. 唐書 卷二百二十一上 西域列傳 一百四十六上
20. 康熙字典 未集中 羊部
21. 理番廳全志 卷一 同治五年
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